

# HUDSON BAY ROUTE ASSOCIATION

## *Executive Report to the Membership*

OCTOBER - 1949

### *To Members of Hudson Bay Route Association*

Dear Members:

We are pleased at this time to report better progress relative to exports and imports via Churchill than what was expected at the beginning of the navigation season. There was quite a lot of anxiety in many quarters when the Canadian Wheat Board sent out an urgent appeal to farmers to rush grain to the port as several ships were on the high seas and the prospect of having them return empty became a real threat to future developments.

The people of the prairies are indebted to the Sifton Press, the small town weeklies and the radio. These media of publicity came all out in support of your Association's efforts to secure a speed up of deliveries of wheat by farmers to Port Churchill and they did not spare the authorities for "bungling" their affairs. The elevator at Churchill should of course have been filled with wheat when the first ship arrived from Overseas. But all is well that ends well and we can now press forward toward bigger and better achievements. During the crisis, as conflicting reports of the general situation were circulated, your executive decided to send a representative to Churchill in the person of Mr. O. R. Cadwell, who has intimate knowledge of the grain business and his report will no doubt be of interest.

Your Executive when meeting to receive Mr. Cadwell's report on September 29th, decided that the ANNUAL CONVENTION be held at the City Hall, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan on Saturday, FEBRUARY 11th, 1950. Father R. Ferron of the Roman Catholic Mission at Churchill who has spent the most active years of his life in the near Arctic and is familiar with navigation in the Bay and straits has accepted an invitation to address the convention. We trust that the membership will plan now to attend the Convention. Rural and urban councils and board of trade in particular should make certain that they be represented and thus taken an active part in promoting the Hudson Bay Route which is such an essential part of the general development in the North and forms the basis for the active development of trade with Britain, our best customer.

A summary of recent activities of the Association may be of interest.

1. We have applied for Incorporation.
2. Working close co-operation with the Western Technical Committees for general development of the Hudson Bay Route and trade with Britain.
3. Keeping in close contact with authorities overseas, both direct and through

the Saskatchewan Government Agent General in London and The Dalgleish Shipping Line.

4. Pressing for educational reference material re Churchill and the Hudson Bay Route to be placed in schools and university libraries.
5. Promoting excursions to Churchill via land and water transportation.
6. The North West of Manitoba is now organized and work in Saskatchewan is carried on quite successfully.
7. Large quantities of literature is being constantly distributed in Canada, the U.S.A. and the British Isles.

The general work of the office has more than doubled over last year. Naturally, finances are required to meet expenses, may we ask every assistance to our Field Representative when at work in your respective communities. Rural and urban Councils, Boards of Trade and other groups of organized citizens can assist us by sending in their Affiliation Fees direct to the office. The Association needs your support.

On behalf of the Executive,

Frank Eliason, Secretary.

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## *Report of Mr. O. R. Cadwell's Visit to Port Churchill*

September 12-21, 1949.

Acting under the instructions from the President and Secretary of the Hudson Bay Route Association, I left Saskatoon on September 12th, for the Port of Churchill, Manitoba. Several conflicting reports about the operations of the Railway and the Port during the Navigation Season had appeared in the Press and the purpose of my trip was to learn as much as possible about the actual situation.

I arrived at The Pas 7 a.m. and as Passengers must stop over until 2.30 p.m. I interviewed Major McLaughlin, Manager of the Hudson Bay Railway who's Office is at The Pas. I was pleased to learn that deliveries of grain had increased since harvest began and 16 ships from Overseas were expected to arrive at Churchill which was one ship more than in 1948. The Exports would exceed any previous year. The grain this season was in good condition, average dockage was 4%. The Port Elevator kept anywhere up to 2½% of the dockage for cleaning and the balance of screenings became the property of the Elevator Companies. The Companies shipped the screenings to the head of the lakes via rail, 69 carloads were thus disposed of in 1948. It was not known why the screenings were not sold in the West.

In answer to my question relative to the number of bushels which could be handled by the Railway and Elevator during the present navigation season I was told that if the Elevator at Churchill was filled with cleaned grain at the opening of the season 23 million bushels of grain could be handled without any difficulty. Later the port authorities confirmed the foregoing.

I also interviewed the Editor of the Local Paper, a good booster for the route and we were offered space for publicity free of cost, his paper has a circulation of 6000 in Canada and England.

I left The Pas at 2.30 for Churchill. The train was well patronized and I was told that it was the best paying train in the West but the train schedule was all wrong in that the passengers, many of whom were commercial travelers and military personnel could not afford to stay over at The Pas from

7 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. The only reason given for the delay was that the passengers spent some money in the town while waiting for the train to leave. A group got together and worked out a schedule which would be satisfactory if acceptable to the Railway, i.e.—

Leave Winnipeg Monday at 1 p.m.  
Arrive at The Pas Tuesday at 7 a.m.  
Leave The Pas Tuesday at 7.30 a.m.  
Arrive Churchill Wednesday at 7.30 a.m.  
Leave Churchill Wednesday at 8 p.m.  
Arrive The Pas Thursday at 7 p.m.  
Leave The Pas Thursday at 7.30 p.m.  
Arrive Winnipeg Friday at 11.30 a.m.

If train schedules were changed as proposed a saving of 24 hours would result from Winnipeg to Churchill and would allow passengers 10 hours (day light) at Churchill. Travel would increase as passengers would not have to suffer for lack of hotel accommodation at Churchill—many of them had to stay in the waiting room in the station overnight—military personnel and their families and friends preferred trains to air travel and if the train came through without hindrance travel would increase perceptibly. Opinions were expressed by passengers, trainmen, military officers and business men at Churchill that two through passenger trains per week would be a paying proposition for the Railway.

Opinions were also freely expressed that a representative layman who had the interest in the route at heart should be appointed to work with the management of the H.B. Railway as adjustments in various lines are very necessary.

(A recommendation to this effect has been submitted to the Royal Commission of Transportation by the Association).

Upon arrival at Churchill I called and discussed matters pertaining to Exports and Imports with the Port and Elevator Authorities. The following is a summary of what I learned.

1. The Port can handle 23-25 million bushels of grain during the present season if the elevator is filled with cleaned grain before arrival of ships.

2. After a bad start this year wheat is now arriving in volume and exports will exceed the 1948 season as will also the imports.

3. It is difficult to operate efficiently because ships arrivals are irregular. For instance, the dock can accommodate three ships. If more arrive during the loading period (about 2 days) they must remain anchored in the harbor until the docks are cleared and this is very costly. At times ships arrive at lengthy intervals and about 35 stevedores, brought from Montreal have been idle at from 8 to 10 days with wages paid. The Elevator employees can be employed during such periods but not the stevedores. It should be quite possible to route the ships to arrive say 3 at a time every two or three days.

4. The Railway refuses to operate a switch engine in the yards and regular train crews are forced to work up to 17 hours per day. The men are dissatisfied and in any event are not able to place cars in position to unload regularly.

5. The Port is equipped to handle shipments of horses, livestock, hogs, also dairy and poultry products if refrigeration is provided which of course is a matter of negotiations for the shippers. Coal can be unloaded by the bucket method but railway scales are a necessity (the Association has applied for scales but without results).

6. Elevator Companies prefer to ship grain to their own terminals. Line Companies have provided about 40% of the grain this year. Many expressed

the opinion that the Wheat Pools in the west should acquire ownership of the elevator.

7. As regards services provided by the Customs Department goods are cleared immediately upon arrival if billed out correctly. If for instance a carload of automobiles (4) is billed to one agent they are cleared for shipment at once but if less than a carload there is delay. As there are no banking facilities and if Bills of Lading have to be cleared through the bank at The Pas considerable delay may result. Banking services are very necessary. (The Association has been pressing for this for some time).

### THE TOWN

The town is growing fast. A \$50,000 school is under construction. The citizens have applied for Incorporation. A Local Council Government is necessary as the bank refuses to establish a branch unless the town is incorporated and the people can secure title to their lots which forms a basis for credit.

The Whale Processing Plant is doing well and will ship 5000 gallons of oil to markets. Whale meat is processed for fur farms. Opportunities for the Fishing Industry are being investigated. The territory is a hunter's paradise but better hotel and restaurant services are required. The airport and military establishments are very elaborate but the officers and personnel are clamoring for better passenger services and hotel accommodation in the town.

One can not help but wonder why the Federal Government is not actively promoting the development of the port. They have an investment of 57 million dollars to protect. No new development can prosper unless some attention is paid to the comforts of those who are residents in such an area and to the travelling public. The government should at least pave the road from the docks to the railway station and the airport and military camp and the strip of land from the station to the dock situated between the railway and the road, which is an unsightly mess, should at least be levelled off so as to present a reasonably decent approach to the town.

Having expended the amount of capital above referred to it would also be good business for the government and the project to build a modern hotel to which should be attached a taxi service. If the Federal Government will take a lead in this matter the Government of Manitoba and the town authorities when established will no doubt undertake necessary improvement and beautification in the town itself.

The Canadian Pacific Railway will not ship grain to Churchill unless they can secure running rights over the Hudson Bay Railway. They would also build a line from Nipawin to The Pas if these rights on the Hudson Bay Railway were assured. I trust that this and other matters referred to will be dealt with by the executive.

I inquired about the time required to return empty cars from Churchill to Saskatoon as compared from the Head of the Lakes. Box cars are returned to Saskatoon from Churchill in 7 days and from Port Arthur 13 days is required. It is apparent therefore that by shipping grain to Churchill congestion on the railways during the harvest period can to some extent be minimized.

Respectfully submitted,

O. R. Cadwell, Field Representative.

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**"BUY BRITISH" -- EXPORT AND IMPORT VIA CHURCHILL**

